United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Chief Military Observer of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia negotiates cease-fire with parties involved in Yugoslav conflict; meanwhile, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina says shelling has resumed in Sarajevo.

+ Security Council imposes wide-ranging sanctions against Yugoslavia with immediate effect, in an effort to end the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Japan, United States, Canada and Switzerland announce pledges at International Pledging Conference on Drought Situation in Southern Africa, in Geneva.

+ Secretary-General leaves New York for opening of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday, 3 June; visit to Uruguay and Chile will follow.

+ World leaders to convene at United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 to 14 June.

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A United Nations spokesman reported today that General John Wilson, Chief Military Observer of United Nations Protection Force Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), had negotiated a cease-fire with the parties involved, which was to have taken immediate effect. He said there was also indications of willingness on all sides to enter into negotiations to reopen Sarajevo airport. Negotiations were to begin tomorrow morning, under the mediation of UNPROFOR.

However, at a press conference at Headquarters today, the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mohamed Sacirbey, said that hours before the cease-fire was to come into effect, shelling had resumed in Sarajevo and some of the surrounding towns. He added, "Maybe more importantly, we were informed that the Yugoslav Air Force attacked a couple of towns in the northern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Tusla."

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Expressing appreciation for the Security Council's imposition of sanctions against Yugoslavia, he said his Government was particularly pleased that the Council supported the establishment of a security zone encompassing Sarajevo and its airport. "The security zone will help unblock the flow of food and medicine to the people of Sarajevo," he said. "Obviously, we still need to see how in fact the security zone will be implemented and, frankly, hours and days means that more people are dying and more people lack medicine and more people may be starving."

Responding to reports of continuing bombardment of Sarajevo, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Saturday urged President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia to use his influence with the Serbian side in Bosnia and Herzegoniva to bring an end to the shelling of the city. In a statement issued at Headquarters, he also said he had appealed to the Commander of the Serbian forces in the republic to cease the bombardment, and to the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, to facilitate the withdrawal of the blockaded members of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) from barracks in the city.

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The Security Council has imposed wide-ranging sanctions against Yugoslavia (now consisting of Serbia and Montenegro) with immediate effect, in an effort to end the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other republics which were formerly part of the Yugoslav State.

The measure came into effect on Saturday when the Security Council adopted resolution 757 (1992), with no votes against and two absentions (China and Zimbabwe). Under that resolution, the Council called for an embargo on Yugoslav products and commodities, financial and economic contacts, sports contacts and scientific, technical and cultural exchanges. All States are required to deny take-off and landing rights for aircraft coming from or destined to land in Yugoslavia, unless the particular flight has been approved for humanitarian or other approved purposes.

The Council demanded that all parties create immediately the necessary conditions for unimpeded delivery of humanitarian supplies to Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the establishment of a security zone encompassing Sarajevo and its airport.

The Council noted that "in the very complex context of events in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, all parties bear some responsibility for the situation". But it deplored the failure of the Yugoslav authorities -- and the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) in particular -- to end its involvement in the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the requirements of resolution 752 of 15 May.

Addressing the Council, Sir David Hannay, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations said it was not difficult to determine that multiple rocket launchers were "not simply found in a Serbian peasant's barn"; they were supplied and paid for by the authorities in Belgrade.

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Explaining his Government's decision to abstain, Li Daoya, Permanent Representative of China, said that China favoured appropriate measures by the international community for and early settlement of the crisis, but believed that opportunities still existed to resolve the crisis with other means than sanctions.

The sanctions are to remain in effect until the Council decides that the authorities in Yugoslavia, including the Army, have taken effective steps to fulfil the requirements of resolution 752.

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In Geneva, the International Pledging Conference on the Drought Situation in Southern Africa, organized jointly by the United Nations and the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), opened today at the Palais des Nations. The Conference aims at raising funds to ease the suffering Southern African countries who are experiencing the worst drought in decades.

Among those addressing the Conference, the President of Botswana and Chairman of the SADCC, Quett Ketumile Masire, described the desperate situation facing the 10 countries, saying that in Angola and Mozambique the war had devastated the economy and national institutions and dislocated communication and families.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Eliasson, told the meeting that the drought's impact was already severe on those most vulnerable, those least able to withstand the ravages. Malnutrition, hunger and lack of water had reached alarming levels, he said.

Pledges announced so far include a donation from Japan of $81 million; the United States has pledged 794,000 additional metric tonnes of food and $106 million in non-food assistance; Canada has donated Canadian $30 million Canadian dollars worth of food aid; and Switzerland has pledged $10 million.

Last week, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali appealed for $854 million to meet the urgent needs of the 10 States -- Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe -- most of which are traditional food-exporters that now look to the international community for relief from the drought.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali left New York this afternoon for Rio de Janeiro, where he will open the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on Wednesday, 3 June.

According to his Spokesman, the Secretary-General will travel to Montevideo, Uruguay, for an official visit on Thursday, 4 June, and to Santiago de Chile for an official visit on Sunday, 7 June. He will then

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return to Rio to participate in the Summit. The Secretary-General will return to New York on Monday, 15 June.

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More than 100 Heads of State and Government will gather in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from Wednesday, 3 June, through Sunday, 14 June, for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

The Conference, also known as the "Earth Summit", will consider the adoption of a Rio Declaration on Environment and Development -- a set of 27 principles to govern the economic and environmental behaviour of individuals and nations in the quest for global sustainability. Participants will also discuss "Agenda 21", a blueprint for action for the sustainable development of planet Earth into the twenty-first century. The Agenda's recommendations to the Conference address issues such as protection of the oceans, transboundary air pollution, desertification and drought, as well as the role of indigenous peoples, the business community and women in implementing sustainable development. Delegates to the Earth Summit are also expected to sign a set of principles on the world's forests, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Framework Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Conference will involve an unprecedented level of participation by non-governmental organizations. They will convene at the "92 Global Forum" a series of parallel events and meetings.

A highlight of the Rio gathering will be the observance of World Environment Day, on 5 June, marking the twentieth anniversary of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden. There will be a tree-planting ceremony on the grounds of the Conference site, co-hosted by President Fernando Collor of Brazil and King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

The Secretary-General will open the Earth Summit on Wednesday, 3 June. It will include a seven-day general debate in plenary sessions; concurrent negotiating meetings of a Main Committee; and a two-day summit segment, starting on 12 June.

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